

Teaching the True Fundamentals of Food Preparation

The NATIONAL Cooking SCHOOL

A complete Cookery Arts Course in 12 Lessons dealing with all the Fundamentals of this Important Subject. Thoroughly practical to the beginner as well as to the experienced Cook who is interested in the newer, better, more economical methods.

Prepared by - - - - Katherine Caldwell

LESSON FOUR

Pastry and Pie Fillings

Good pastry (which every girl or woman wants to make) is wholesome and digestible enough for the normal person; it is poor pastry that is so highly indigestible.

There are few materials and few utensils needed for making pastry—yet it can be a tricky thing to make, for the cook who does not understand the little turns and pointers that bring success. With it they are all here in this lesson. In Lesson 3, we learned about soft doughs. In this lesson, we study one of the most important Stiff Doughs. The methods of mixing are much alike, but fat is cut into the dry ingredients before liquid is added.

Ingredients for Pastry

1. A dependable flour, one with tender gluten preferred.
2. Salt—1-4 teaspoon for each cup flour or a little more if your fat is unsalted.
3. Baking Powder—a very little may be used, 1-4 teaspoon for each cup flour is the amount needed to help make pastry light, at least until you have gained experience; then you may use it or not.
4. Shortening—a hard, cold fat of neutral flavor, or part butter and part shortening may be used; 1-3 cup fat altogether to each cup flour makes a pleasantly rich paste, and 1-4 cup fat to each cup of flour is the least that should be used.
5. Water—should be ice-cold. Allow just enough to make a paste that will roll without sticking when turned out on a lightly floured bake board; 3 tablespoons to the cup to begin with—and more just sprinkled in if necessary. Too much water makes a sticky paste, which is very hard and brittle when baked. Too little water results in a very crumbly, overrich crust. Rolling in extra flour on the board cuts down on the richness, the good texture and flavor of the pastry. You will soon get "the feeling" for mixing your paste.

Utensils Required

1. Mixing bowl, flour sifter, measuring cup, measuring spoons.
2. Wire pastry blender or a knife or steel fork to cut fat into dry ingredients.
3. Wooden bake board or canvas bake sheet; wooden rolling pin; the pin may be covered with ribbed cotton (the leg of a small child's ribbed white cotton stocking makes a good cover); a covered rolling pin works better, holds the flour evenly—and for the same reason we favor the canvas cloth on which to turn out our doughs.
4. Pie or bake pans, or baking sheet, etc.

Kinds of Pastry

There are two kinds of ordinary pastry in general use: a close-textured paste and a light flaky paste made up of thin layers of crust with air between. We are not treating actual puff paste.

It is the method of mixing that is largely responsible for these different results—particularly the way the shortening is added. The kind of shortening, too, makes a difference: a liquid fat like cooking oil will make the very close-textured kind of paste, while solid fats are used in the flaky, as well as the close type.

Methods for Making Pastry

Quick Paste

1. Sift flour, measure it and sift, with salt, into bowl.
2. Measure fat. (For excellent short-cut method, see Lesson 1.)
3. (a) For a fairly flaky paste: Cut fat into dry ingredients, using wire pastry blender or a knife or a knife in each hand, or a steel fork that has 2 or 3 prongs. Use a quick, short chopping motion, until all fat is in particles the size of small peas.

(b) For a close-textured paste. Rub shortening into dry ingredients with chilled finger tips. (Liquid shortening also makes a close paste.) It is stirred into the flour before adding water.

4. Sprinkle very cold water carefully over the surface—just enough so paste will roll. Mix quickly and lightly with a knife. The dough should absorb all the water, but should not stick to the bowl.

"Working" the dough will tend to make it elastic by developing the gluten in the flour; that is why we knead a yeast dough in making bread and why we handle biscuit and pastry doughs (which we wish to be tender) as little and as lightly as possible.

5. Scrape out paste onto lightly floured boards or canvas; pat out and roll, if to be used at once. Chill first if possible.

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6. Wrap dough in waxed paper and chill well, if possible, before rolling again for use.

The reason we chill paste is because there is greater force to the expanding cold air when the intense over-heat strikes it—and so pastry is made lighter and flakier.

I want you to notice that it is the method of adding the shortening which makes the distinct difference in the finished pastry. There is bound to be heat from the fingers, which softens the fat and blends it into the flour, instead of just mixing particles of fat through the flour. Sometimes you may like one of these pastes better than the other—for instance, some cars seem rather nicer with the close-textured paste whilst for others, we like a flaky paste.

This method I have just given (even when the shortening is cut in) makes only a moderately flaky paste—and when it is rich, it can really be used in many ways which we were accustomed to think needed puff pastry; this very flaky paste is easier to make than puff pastry.

Superior Flaky Paste

This is an excellent paste to make in quantities; wrapped in wax paper it can be kept two or three weeks, if very cold.

1. Sift flour, measure it and sift into bowl.

2. Measure fat, same as for quick paste. (There must be 1-3 as much fat as there is flour for this paste.)

3. Cut half the fat (a nice, white, neutral-flavored shortening or lard) into dry ingredients, by method (a) into Quick Paste.

4. Add water—by method in Quick Paste.

5. Turn out on floured board or canvas, pat and roll out in sheet 1/4 inch thick; keep square as possible.

6. You have half of your hard, cold fat left. In this case, it may be either white shortening or butter. Divide it in three. Cut one piece into small bits, spread these over the front half of your sheet of paste, dust over lightly with flour, pick up the back edge and fold it over the fat, enclosing as much air as possible.

7. Pinch edges and pat and roll out carefully, so that pieces of fat will not break through. Don't roll it thin.

8. Fold paste and chill it.

9. Roll out again, dot half of sheet with the second measure of fat divided in small pieces, dust over lightly with flour, fold over, pinch edges, roll out carefully, fold and chill.

10. Again roll out chilled dough, spread the last measure of fat on half of it, fold the other half over. Keep well chilled, closely covered and use as required.

This Superior Flaky Paste makes nice little flaky tart shells, is good for fruit pies and for meat pies, or to hold a creamy filling, and it will make many of the little fancy pastries which we usually make with puff pastry.

Using Our Pastry

We use our pastry commonly in several ways.

1. As empty pie shells or tart shells—For these: (a) We fit a thinly rolled (1/8 inch) sheet of pastry loosely over the bottom of an inverted pie pan or tart pans, being careful not to stretch it, because it would later shrink back. With scissors or sharp knife we trim off around the edge of the pan. In fitting the paste over the pan, we try to catch as little air underneath as possible. Before putting in oven, we prick it all over with a fork to allow any imprisoned air bubbles to escape.
- (b) Another method—We line pie or tart pans with pastry, fitting it in generously and not trimming it too closely. Prick paste to allow air bubbles to escape; cut 1/4 inch strips of paste, wet one side, and apply to rim, fluting between thumb and finger; this helps prevent shrinkage and improves appearance. The paste may be weighted down by putting a sheet of wax paper over the pastry and then about half filling the dish with raw rice or beans. The rice or beans are unbaked for later use, and shells hold their shape beneath the weight.
2. As single or double crusts for shallow pies and tarts, when the filling is cooked with the pastry.
3. As a top crust for deep-dish fruit pies and meat pies. Some solid support should be put in the middle of dish to hold up the paste, if the filling "cooks down."

4. Various fancy pastries, filled and unfilled.

5. As cake-and-pastry combinations—such as Maids of Honor.

Baking Temperatures

Heat should come from the bottom of the oven for pastry, so place it on a rack on the bottom or near it, according to your oven. When pastry is baked by itself, without fillings, a very hot oven should be used for ordinary paste, and just slightly less hot for the extra-rich paste.

1. Shells—Empty pie shells may be given 500 degrees F. at first, the temperature made lower as pastry shows color.

2. Fruit Pies—A fruit pie should be given a hot oven at first, about 450 degrees F., and when paste takes on color, heat should be reduced and baking continued at a moderate temperature, 375 degrees F., until fruit is tender; if top crust is in danger of becoming too brown, put a paper over it.

3. Meat Pies—Meat pies, since their filling has been already cooked, can be put into the hot oven and removed when pastry is baked—which will allow plenty of time to heat the filling if cold.

4. Custard-type Pies—Pies or tarts with a custard-type filling, any filling in which eggs are used in generous proportion—cannot be cooked long at high temperatures, because all egg dishes demand slow cooking. Put the pie into a hot oven at first, and give it long enough to "set" the paste—but not long enough to allow the filling to boil. About 10 minutes is usually enough to give the paste a good start without endangering the filling. Temperature must then be sharply reduced to moderate or rather slow heat, and cooking continued until filling has set to the consistency of a baked custard. Test the filling by thrusting a silver knife into the center; if it comes out misty and moist, filling is not cooked enough; when knife comes out dry, remove pie from heat immediately.

There is another successful method I advise for pies with a filling of cream or custard type. Bake the empty shell first, in the second way I have described, for 10 minutes at 500 degrees F.; take from oven, fill the shell, and return pie to the oven in which temperature has been reduced to moderate heat. There is a lesson coming toward the end of your course, which deals entirely with 'Frostings and Fillings for cakes—and amongst these fillings are the most important of the creamy and custard-type mixtures which are used also for filling pies. So I am just going to give you the pumpkin pie as an example in this lesson—then you will have several of these fillings in Lesson 10.

Filling Pies and Tarts

Learning to make pastry is the first step in making good pies.

The second is to really understand at least a few kinds of filling, for making double-crust and open-shell pies, deep-dish pies, meat pies and the little tarts and fancy pastries that are often so useful.

When you have mastered the first part of this lesson, and have a covered roll of pastry in your refrigerator keeping cold for use when it is wanted, you can start the study of this part of the lesson and make the different kinds of fillings in their turn.

These are the types we will consider here or in the books of the Easy-Way Series.

1. Deep-dish fruit pies.
2. Deep-dish meat pies.
3. Two-crust pies or tarts.
4. Creamy or custard-type fillings: (a) Baked in pastry shell.

APPETIZING

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(b) Cooked, cooled and turned into cold baked shell.

Deep-Dish Fruit Pie

1. Make pastry according to rules and chill it.
2. Prepare fruit as may be necessary—for example, pare, core and quarter or slice apples or pears; peel and stone peaches; pierce the skins of plums, peel and cut up rhubarb, etc.
3. Put a cup, jelly glass or other support in dish to hold up pastry in center.
4. Put fruit in buttered deep pie dish, heaping it very high, because of course it will shrink during cooking. (Slicing or cutting fruit finely speeds up the cooking when desired.)

5. Add enough sugar to sweeten whatever fruit you are using—the amounts needed will be different. Add any little touch of flavor with the sugar—a little dusting of spice such as cinnamon or nutmeg, a little grated lemon rind or dash of lemon juice; orange, too is good sometimes. Butter dotted over filling gives added richness and flavor.

6. Cut off enough of your paste to cover your dish. Roll out to 1-8 inch thickness. Cut some "eyelets" in center of paste so steam can escape. Fit it very loosely over the fruit—don't stretch it or it will shrink later. (If desired a strip of paste 1-2 inch wide may be adjusted around the rim of the pie plate, dampened, and the crust top sealed to it, before trimming.)

7. Trim off with scissors—not too close to rim of dish—press down about the rim and crimp the edge of your pastry cover with finger and thumb or with pastry crimper.

8. Put into a hot oven for the first 10 minutes, 450 deg. F., then reduce temperature to moderate and cook until fruit is tender. If necessary, put a paper over top of pie to prevent pie from becoming too brown.

Meat Pies

Meat pies are made with fresh meat or fowl or with left-overs of cooked meat (along with a suitable sauce for that meat) and a pastry top.

Fresh meat should be simmered gently until tender, then a sauce made, using the stock from the meat; flavor well and thicken it with browned or white flour (see how to make such sauces in Lesson 1).

If cooked meat is used, make a generous quantity of brown or white sauce to go with it.

Fill pie dish with meat and sauce—vegetables also may be put in and these should be already cooked unless they will require only short heating.

Cover the pie: (a) With pastry crust, same as for deep fruit pie. (b) With baking powder biscuit dough made by either the standard method or the biscuit flour method given in Lesson 3; roll dough to 1-2 inch thickness and cut or pat into shape to fit top of dish. Make gashes in top to allow steam to escape. Or shape as small biscuits and place over hot filling to bake. Or use drop-biscuit dough.

Two-Crust Pies

1. Prepare filling.
2. Line shallow pie pan, putting pastry in easily and gently pushing out air from beneath pastry with the finger tips. With scissors or sharp knife, trim around the edge of pan—not too close in any case, and with about an inch of pastry left to spare for a juicy fruit pie; this can be doubled back over the top crust and crimped with the fingers, as an aid in keeping juice from flowing out.

3. Turn in filling—it is usually a fruit filling that is put between two crusts; sweeten (mixing spices with sugar when used), fill and prepare for oven according to table of instructions for fruit pies which follows.

4. Cover with top crust, in which eyelets have been cut; turn edge of under crust over edge of upper crust, wetting with cold water, and pinch close, crimping at the same time, with the fingers. If filling is juicy, bind edge with wet cotton and thrust paper funnels through upper crust.

5. Bake at 450 deg. F. till brown, then at 375 deg. F.

Fruit Pies

Blackberry—Amount of fruit, 3 cups berries; sugar, 1-3 to 1 cup; flour, 3 tbs.; butter, 1 tbs.

Cherry—Amount of fruit, 3 cups

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pit cherries; sugar, 1 to 1 1/2 cups, flour, 3 tbs.; butter 1 tbs.

Gooseberry—Amount of fruit, 3 cups berries; stew with sugar and cool; sugar, 1 cup; flour, 4 tbs.; butter, 2 tbs.

Raspberry—Amount of fruit, 3 cups berries; sugar, 1-2 to 1 cup; flour, 3 tbs.; butter, 1 tbs.

Strawberry—Amount of fruit, 3-4 to 1 cup; flour, 3 tbs.; butter, 1 tbs.

Blueberry—Amount of fruit, 3 cups berries; sugar, 1-2 cup; flour, 4 tbs.; butter, 1 tbs.

Note—If berries are very ripe, or when sweet or canned fruits are used, add 2 to 4 tablespoons lemon juice for tartness.

Open-Faced Pies

As I have told you, there are two types of pies that have only an under crust—

- (a) When filling is cooked in pastry.
 - (b) When empty shell and filling put into shell when both are absolutely cold.
- Note—These open-faced pies or tarts are variously finished:
- (a) Plain, or with sprinkling of spice.
 - (b) With narrow crossed strips of pastry.
 - (c) With sweetened and flavored whipped cream.
 - (d) With meringue.

Meringue Topping for Pies

Use the egg whites for a meringue—it really requires 3 egg whites to make a fine, full meringue for a good sized pie. Allow 2 tablespoons granulated sugar for each egg white, or a little less if this is too sweet for your taste. Beat the egg whites until stiff, but not dry, then add sugar a little at a time and beat until very stiff. Add the flavoring. Drop in spoonfuls over the pie or spread roughly. Sprinkle with a little granulated sugar and put into a slow oven (275 degrees F.) to brown delicately. Do not try to hurry it, or you will have a tough, watery meringue; give it about 15 minutes and you may even reduce the oven heat a little at about half time. Meringue treated in this way should never fall or be tough.

Plain Apple Pie

Sliced apples 3-4 to 1 cup sugar (white or brown) Pinch salt 1 to 2 tablespoons butter 3-4 teaspoon cinnamon or 1-3 teaspoon grated nutmeg and a little teaspoon lemon juice. Prepare and mix filling, using enough apples to heap the dish, and bake between two crusts, or as an open-faced pie.

Rich Apple Crumble Pie

1-2 cups flour 1-4 cup sugar (white or well-packed brown) 3-4 cup soft butter Sliced apples and mix with the sugar; work in the butter, squeezing and blending with the hand. Knead and pat the paste to size and shape of dish; use deep baking dish, filling with sliced apples sweetened and flavored as for ordinary pie; lay the paste on top and bake in moderate oven, about 375 degrees F., until apples are tender and top a tempting brown. Serve with cream or a well-chilled custard sauce. This is also delicious if a layer

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of the rich crumble-paste is put in the bottom of a square pan, the fruit next, and a top layer of the paste. Cut in oblongs to serve.

Pumpkin Pie

This is a good example of the custard-type of pie filling: 2 cups cooked or canned pumpkin 1 cup sugar 1 teaspoon cinnamon 1-3 teaspoon ground allspice 1-2 to 1 teaspoon ginger 1-3 teaspoon mace 3 tablespoons melted butter 3 slightly beaten eggs 2 cups scalded milk 1-2 cups coconut (optional) Combine ingredients in this order, mixing thoroughly. Coconut may be used, when desired. Turn into pan lined with pastry. Bake in hot oven 15 minutes, then reduce to moderate for about half an hour, or until silver knife thrust into center comes out clear.

Some of the most attractive little pastries, and cakelets that use pastry, will be found in the Easy-Way Cake Book and Planning the party which no doubt you will have to help you make special occasions successful and routine meals more interesting!

Fishing by Hand Is New Sport at Beach

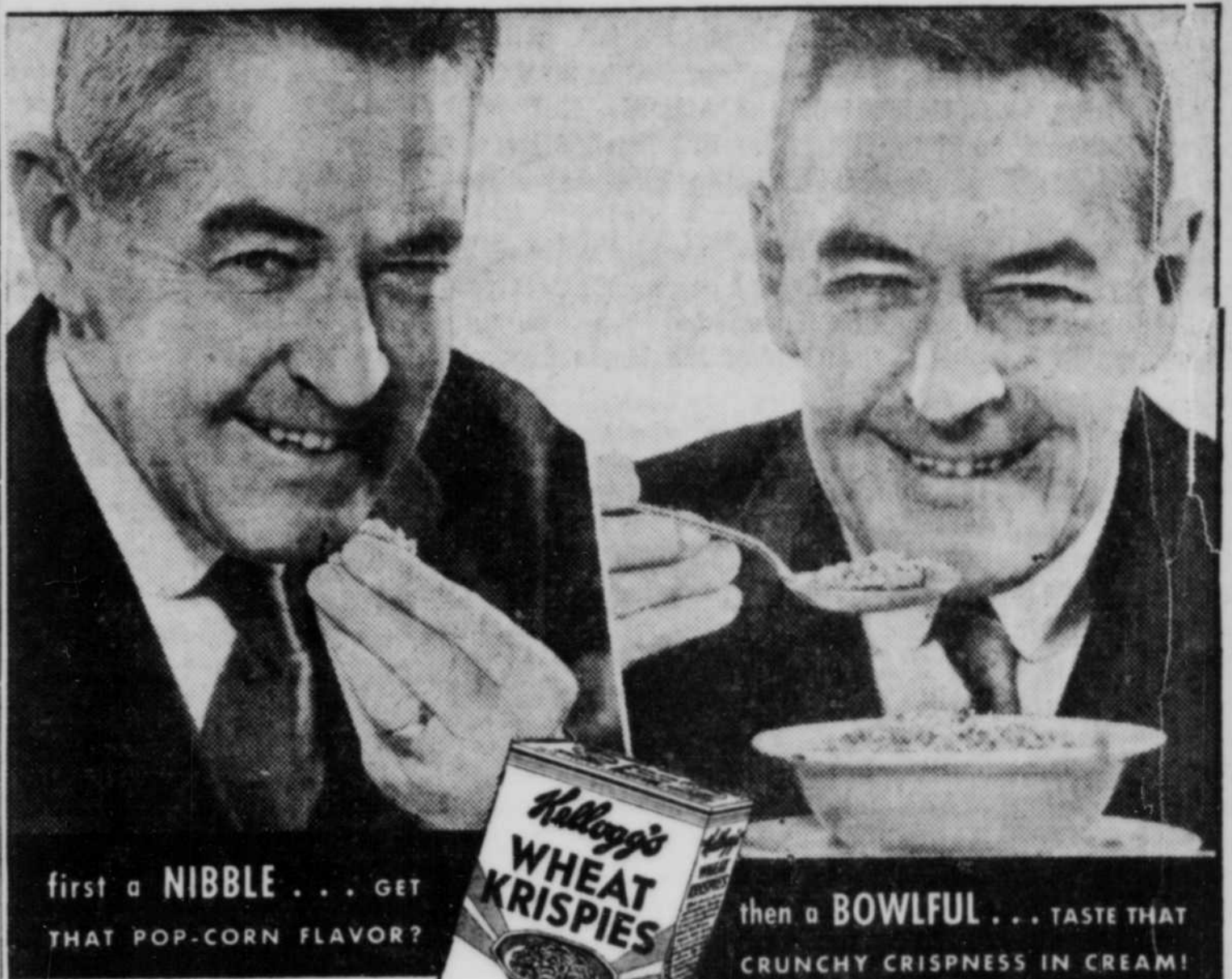
The record for catching most fish by hand is claimed by Fred Latham and John L. Smith of Brownsville. And when they say "by hand" they mean by hand.

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